



The Dot:

**Using the movie to discuss
social and emotional needs**

The Dot (NR)

Goldberger, G., and Lechner, J. (Directors). (2004). *The Dot...and more stories to make you feel good*. United States: Scholastic Video

Issues Addressed: fear of failure, self-confidence, empathy, underachievement, facing challenges, perfectionism, being well-rounded, advocacy and support

This movie is an audio-visual representation of the book, The Dot, by Peter H. Reynolds. Vashti is a young girl who convinces herself that she can't draw. By the time art class is over she has not made one mark on her paper. Her teacher comes over and encourages her to make a mark. Vashti picks up the pencil and slams the point down making a dot. Her art teacher asks her to sign it. Later, when Vashti returns to art class she is surprised to see her dot in a fancy gilded frame hanging in the classroom. Taking inspiration from these she draws more and more dots of all different sizes and colors. Her dot collection is displayed at the school art show where a little boy admires her work and comes to her in amazement. He claims he can't draw and Vashti encourages him to make a mark. When he does she says "Now, sign it."

Introductory Activities

- Pass out pieces of paper with one big dot in the center. Ask students if it is art. Ask students what the dot could be. Then, have them add lines and details around the dot to turn it into a picture.
- Show artwork by Van Gogh, Kandinsky, Pollock, Warhol, and Matisse. Ask: Would you call these art? Are any of them better examples of art than the other? Could you replicate the artwork? What makes art? (Certainly, other artists are appropriate for this activity. Just be sure to mix abstract with representational art.) Show a piece of a child's artwork. Ask again what makes art.
- Ask: What is something that you feel like you are not very good at doing? Why do you think you're not good? Do you think you could ever improve? Do you want to improve?
- Ask: What is a mentor? Do you have a mentor or a role model? Who is it and why?

Discussion Questions	
Self-confidence, facing challenges	<i>Vashti thinks she can't draw. Is there anything you feel like you can't do well? How do you feel about not being able to do something well?</i>
Fear of failure, underachievement	<i>Why doesn't Vashti draw anything? Have you ever waited to start an assignment because you weren't sure how good you could do on it? What happened?</i>
Perfectionism, self-confidence	<i>How do you feel about signing your name on something you're not proud of?</i>
Self-confidence, humility,	<i>How do you think Vashti felt to see her paper hanging in frame? Are you ever embarrassed when your teachers post your work in the classroom? Are you ever proud? When do you feel proud and when do you feel embarrassed?</i>
Self-confidence, advocacy and support	<i>Why do you think Vashti's art teacher framed her dot picture?</i>
Advocacy and support	<i>Who has seen something in you that you didn't know was there? What was it?</i>
Advocacy and support, self-confidence, empathy, peer relations	<i>In the end, Vashti encourages a little boy to become an artist when he doesn't believe in himself. What do you think this did for the little boy?</i>
Being well-rounded, facing challenges	<i>Vashti discovered that she was good at art after all. Have you ever tried to be good at something, but no matter how hard you try you just can't be very good? How does that make you feel? Is it important to be good at everything you try?</i>
Self-confidence	<i>What did Vashti discover about herself during this movie?</i>

Menu of Follow-Up Activities

- Pretend you are Vashti. You have been asked to tell about yourself for the program that will be handed out at the art show. What would you want people to know about you, your art, your journey, and what you have learned?
- Pretend you are Vashti's art teacher. What would you say to her after the art show? What would you say to other kids who think they're not good artists?
- Pretend you are Vashti and you are starting an art club at your school. Make an invitation to send to the other students in the school. Who should be invited to join the club? What will you do in the club?
- Are you ever scared to try something because you think you might not be very good at it? Write a letter or draw a picture to the person who wants you to try something new telling them why you're scared.
- Draw two pictures. On one side of the paper draw something that you have tried over and over but are not very good at doing. On the other side draw a pictures of something that you are very good at doing. How do you feel about the thing you drew in each picture.
- Draw a picture of how you feel when you're not very good at something. Explain to a friend why you feel this way.
- Draw a picture of someone who makes you feel good about yourself no matter how good or bad you are at something. Try to write some words that tell why this person makes you feel so good.